

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Hefley and Crane amendments to reduce or eliminate funds for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The \$300 million in the bill represents a slightly more than 2 percent increase in public broadcasting's buying power over the last decade. We should be investing more in this national cultural and information resource.

I find it incredibly ironic that as we are debating whether to adequately fund one of the most critical cultural institutions of our time, we have recently simply handed over tens of billions of dollars' worth of spectrum to commercial broadcasters--are they going to use this spectrum to provide the depth and breadth of programs and services found in public broadcasting? I don't think so.

Public broadcasters can and should play a significant role in preparing our communities for the 21st century. We need to give them the tools to do so. A Federal commitment to CPB is a commitment to partnering with our communities to invest in our future.

The Nation's public broadcasting system is an outstanding example of the public/private partnership at work. Every dollar appropriated to CPB generates approximately five more from corporate donors, endowments, viewers, and listeners. That's a five to one return on the Federal investment--and the paybacks are in programs, services, and jobs all across the country. I can't think of another Federal program with such a high rate of return.

Public broadcasters are holding up their end of the partnership. In fact, the CPB appropriation represents only 14 percent of the industry's total income. While some might argue that 14 percent is easily replaceable, I believe that the Federal component of the partnership serves as critical seed money to leverage private investments in programs and services. Without the initial CPB funds, many public television, and radio stations would be unable to develop a specific program or service concept to the point where other parties would be interested in investing.

From improving the livability of our communities through programs such as 'Planet Neighborhood' to providing emergency communication services, public broadcast stations use these funds to provide a breadth and depth of critical programs and services to our communities that are unparalleled elsewhere in the broadcast world.

Public broadcasting programs and services are particularly critical for Oregon.

Without OPB, critical educational services would be lost, including: The classroom TV service, which provides instructional television to 30,000 elementary and secondary teachers; college telecourses, which have reached 80,000 students, making OPB one of the top distance educators in America; and since 1987, OPB has prepared more than 3,000 Oregonians for high school equivalency exams, making it one of the State's most highly attended secondary schools.

Public broadcasting is so important to Oregonians that over half of OPB's operating budget comes from more than 100,000 members. OPB's television audience has the largest percentage of prime-time viewers of any American public television market.

We have the tools, infrastructure, and innovative spirit to make communities across the Nation more livable through cultural opportunities. What we need is a national commitment to improving the livability of our communities by investing in culture.

We won't be able to balance the budget by eliminating spending on our Nation's cultural heritage. In fact, the Federal Government spends only about 1/100 th of 1 percent on culture. If we attempt to use our cultural investments to balance the budget, we will lose much more than we would ever gain in deficit reduction.

I urge my colleagues to recognize the long-term economic and social benefits an investment in culture convey to our communities and the Nation as a whole and oppose the Hefley-Crane amendments.